



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

Education

November 2005



PHOTO BY BARBARA RODEY

In March 2005, female students entered the newly renovated National Women's Dormitory in Kabul. The dorm has enabled girls from rural areas to attend institutions of higher learning such as the medical school, Afghan Education University, Polytechnic Institute and Kabul University.

EDUCATION SNAPSHOT

- Enrolled almost 170,000 students in the Accelerated Learning program, many of whom were denied an education under the Taliban.
- Rehabilitated Kabul Women's Dormitory to accommodate 1,100 women from mainly rural areas.
- Enrolled 9,600 students in the Literacy and Community Empowerment Program to provide them with literacy and skills training.
- Established the American University of Afghanistan, a private American-style university in Kabul.

OVERVIEW

USAID's education program was designed in 2002 to meet the urgent need for school building, textbook printing, teacher training, and accelerated learning for over-aged students who had been denied an education under the Taliban. This program has been expanded to include radio-based teacher training, higher education programs and literacy training for workforce development.

PROGRAMS

IMPROVING BASIC EDUCATION

Increasing access to quality primary and secondary schools is a key program priority. USAID is improving basic education through programs aimed at strengthening ministry capacity, improving teacher performance and skills development, and ensuring adequate school materials and environments for learning. To date, USAID has:

- Has printed and distributed nationwide 48.5 million textbooks in Dari and Pashtu for grades 1 – 12; and is printing 11 million new curriculum school books.
- For the accelerated learning program, trained 6,800 teachers and enrolled 170,000 over-age and out of school students, of which 58% are girls.
- Established the International School of Kabul to provide American-style teaching curriculum to K – 12 expatriate and Afghan children.
- In 2004, expanded radio-teacher training program to all 34 provinces reaching 65,000 teachers in daily broadcasts.
- Funded technical advisors to the Ministries of Education and Higher Education to strengthen ministry capacity.
- New Projects: Basic education projects to improve quality of teaching in Ministry of Education and non-governmental schools.

HIGHER EDUCATION

While considerable progress has been made in the past three years, quality of university teaching is generally low, buildings are in poor condition and schools lack furniture and equipment. USAID facilitates university linkages and provides technical assistance and infrastructure development at targeted institutions aimed at improving access to and quality of university education. Achievements include:



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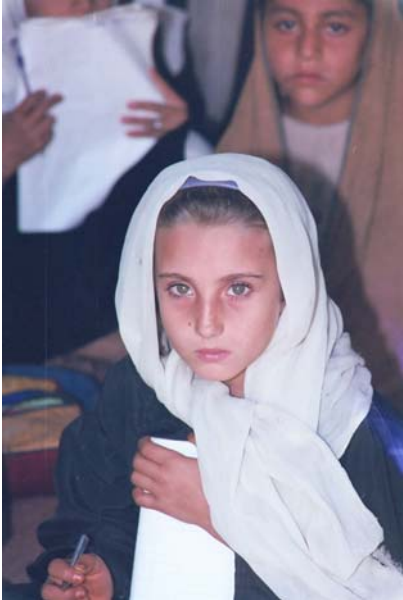


PHOTO BY NITIN MADHAV

Girls attend classes at newly renovated schools in Afghanistan. With USAID's help, 4.8 million children were enrolled in school by the end of 2004, many of them girls.



PHOTO BY ALEJANDRO CHICHERI

The number of teachers in Afghanistan has steadily increased since 2002. Here, a woman teaches at an all-girls school.

- Establishing the American University of Afghanistan, a private English-medium American style university in Kabul.
- Rehabilitating the Kabul Women's Dormitory to accommodate 1,100 women from mainly rural areas who will attend university in Kabul. The first students arrived for the new academic year in March 2005.
- Funding a U.S. university consortium in 2005 supporting Balkh University Faculty of Agriculture (BUFA) in Mazar-e Sharif, in their efforts to modernize curriculum, teaching technologies and techniques.
- Funding a new higher education project to upgrade pre-service teacher education at 16 university faculties of education

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Afghanistan has one of the highest illiteracy rates in the world. In rural areas, where three-fourths of all Afghans live, 90% of the women and 63% of the men are illiterate. In many villages, 95-100% of the women cannot read or write. While USAID's accelerated learning program re-integrates out-of-school children into the formal educational system, USAID's large-scale literacy and occupational skills program takes place outside the formal educational system and focuses on providing literacy and skills training to older girls and women. Activities include:

- Training over 9,600 students around the country in functional literacy, economic self-reliance, grassroots democracy and women's rights through the Literacy and Community Empowerment Program.
- Teaching 8,200 women to read and write, of which 300 qualified to date for further training as community health workers or midwives.
- Established the Women's Teacher Training Institute in Kabul in 2004 as a central resource for government and agencies to access training, materials, and modern pedagogical approaches that support practical and sustainable literacy, numeracy, and life skills.
- New project designed to expand literacy training in rural communities

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

In conjunction with the Ministry of Education, USAID is building schools in rural areas to provide easier access for greater numbers of students. Since 2002, USAID has built or refurbished 376 schools, mostly in remote areas.